

horizontal Bakken play is processed at this plant, which recently underwent a major expansion to handle the dramatically increased volume of natural gas in Richland County that was previously being flared until gathering and transmission systems were built and enlarged.

After the gas plant tour, the Board met with Headington Oil Limited Partnership staff who gave them a presentation similar to Oil and Gas 101, took them on a tour of a producing location and treated them to a wonderful barbeque luncheon along with a drilling rig tour. After lunch, the Board hurried to the Sidney Country Club for its business meeting, where a small army of citizens was already filling the seats. Over 100 people attended the business meeting and the same number showed up early the next morning for the public hearing. Many positive comments were received from Richland County residents about the Board’s visit to their community and the Board’s interest in concerns raised by area citizens. Board members and staff also thought the midsummer trip to Sidney was a good thing: everyone learned some new things, met some new people and enjoyed themselves in the process.



Field trip for members of the Board of Oil & Gas

If you look closely from left to right you will see Board member Don Bradshaw (*second from left in orange shirt*), Board member Wayne Smith next to him, Administrator Tom Richmond (*next to plant employee fourth from left*) and consultant Dan Arthur behind Board Chairperson Linda Nelson (*in red shirt*), part of Board member Joan Stahl behind the man addressing the group, Board member Denzil Young playing with his ear, Board attorney Don Garrity, Board member Jack King in the black shirt behind Mr. Garrity, UIC Director George Hudak and Executive Secretary Terri Perrigo at far right. (*This photo was taken by the Board’s Chief Field Inspector Steve Sasaki.*)

. . . the Richland County horizontal Bakken play is one of the most exciting new oil discoveries in the lower 48 states in the last fifty years.

¹ U S Minerals Management Service defines “play” as: 1) the extent of a petroleum-bearing formation; 2) the activities associated with petroleum development in an area.

WHAT’S NEW IN DNRC: Snippets of Information from Across the State

- DNRC Trust Land Division presented a check for \$57,168,234 to Superintendent of Public Instruction Linda McCulloch for FY 2005 Trust Revenues at the December 19th Land Board meeting.
- The 2005 DNRC Annual Report is complete and posted on the website.
- As of December 5th, approximately 5,000 of the remaining 57,000 water right claims to be examined under HB 22 have been reviewed and are heading to the Montana Water Court.
- DNRC is an active participant in the Missouri River Conservation District Council (MRCDC), assisting in the development and training of members. For more information about the Council, visit them on the web at: missouririvercouncil.info



Richland County is experiencing an oil boom . . .

Cruisin’ State 16
On The Road With The Board of Oil & Gas Conservation

Leaving the familiarity of Billings was hard, and the logistics of getting everyone to Eastern Montana was even harder, but the Montana Board of Oil and Gas Conservation met the challenge and held its July 2005 business meeting and public hearing in Sidney, Montana.

Sidney is the county seat of Richland County, which is experiencing an oil boom because of all the successful horizontal wells producing from the prolific Bakken Formation. With oil prices at over \$50 a barrel, and only a few dry holes drilled, the Richland County horizontal Bakken play¹ is one of the most exciting new oil discoveries in the lower 48 states in the last fifty years.

Because so much of the Board’s work lately has its origins in Richland County, the Board decided in early 2005 to take a meeting to Sidney so the local population could participate in Board proceedings without traveling to Billings.

While in Sidney, the Board and staff went on a field trip. They toured a gas plant, a drilling rig and a producing location. The picture that follows was taken at Bear Paw Energy’s Grasslands Plant, located right across the North Dakota border from Sidney. Much of the associated gas from the

Please see Cruisin’ . . . on back page

“To help ensure Montana’s land and water resources provide benefits for present and future generations”

FROM THE DIRECTOR

December 05

Holiday Greetings DNRC staff!

It’s looking more Christmas-like outside today than it has for many years. Let’s hope that the snow keeps falling!

We’ve had a plate-full of activities this fall. The water adjudication is really ramping up with lots of coverage; landbanking for Trust Lands proceeds with most parcels being ready for auction; fire season has ended and we’re working to make fire-related statutes more relevant. Thanks to all of you who are working on these and many other tasks at DNRC.

As we look forward, I want to update you on how we’re working to improve cooperation, collaboration, and communication inside and outside the agency. First, many of you will participate in **Regional Roundtables** early in the new year to talk about energy savings, IT coordination, “move to market”, training, and lots of other issues that impact us all. Second, we continue to listen to staff and the public about how we can do our jobs better. Finally, we’ll keep you informed about activities in Helena and in the field through the newsletter and other means.

Best wishes to all of you for a Merry Christmas! I look forward to meeting with more of you in 2006.

Mary



Director Mary Sexton
PHOTO By the Governor’s Office

DIVISION LIAISONS	EDITORIAL BOARD	PRODUCTION STAFF
CARDD • Pam Smith Forestry • Kate Kronen Oil & Gas • Terri Perrigo RWRCC • Bob Levitan TLMD • Connie Daruk WRD • Cindy Forgey	Ann Bauchman Dan Bushnell Jack Zanto	Acting Editor Dan Bushnell Layout & Design Donald Howard Photography (as noted)

FINIS

Persons with disabilities who need an alternative, accessible format of this document should contact DNRC at the address above. Phone 406 444-2074 or fax 406 444-2684.



Fiddler On The ‘Hoof’...

Rick Strohmyer Fiddles Across Montana for the Lewis & Clark Bi-Centenial Festivities

I was born and raised in a little farm town in central Nebraska nearly 55 years ago. From a very early age I craved some “*feature*” to my vision of a landscape so after attending a junior college in Nebraska and at my first opportunity, I enrolled at the University of Montana School of Forestry. The U. of M. student enrollment seemed to me to be about the right size and the mountain landscape was a big improvement over the corn and hayfields of Nebraska. This is where I began my education and work in the natural resources arena.

Upon attaining my Bachelor of Science degree in Forestry I began my natural resource management career as a timber sale technician for the federal government. I was soon exposed to my first “forest fire” and was immediately hooked on the adrenaline rush one gets from seeing “Mother Nature” do her thing. I spent the next 15 years fighting wildfires all across the United States and even once or twice in Canada. I worked as a smokejumper for 8 seasons while simultaneously pursuing a semi-professional career as a ski-bum and musician. As a federal firefighter I crossed paths on numerous occasions with Montana state employees and state/county volunteer firefighters on wildfire assignments. Because of my years of work and numerous fire assignments with these firefighters, it became apparent to me that I should try to join the state’s fire organization. In 1985 I applied for and got my first state job as an engine boss with the Plains Unit, Northwest Land Office, DNRC.

At this juncture, I got married and my wife and I proceeded to have two wonderful children. I worked for 2 seasons as a DNRC seasonal employee before getting my first professional appointment as a forester for Libby Unit on the NWLO. I worked at Libby Unit as a “Fire Management / Trust Land Forester” until 1990 when I gained appointment as a “Fire Supervisor / Trust Land Forester on the newly formed Dillon Unit, Central Land Office. I worked for the Dillon Unit for 12 years, progressing to the Unit Manager and then competed and received my current appointment as the Eastern Land Office Area Manager.

As a child in Nebraska, I remember my extended family getting together for significant events, such as weddings, anniversaries etc. and having parties with all of the kids and adults carousing around the farmsteads and dancing and listening to my “Uncle Joe’s Polka Band”. My uncle Joe Pavalka played the fiddle and clarinet in a polka band, but at that time it was also the birth of the “Beatles and the Rolling Stones”, and my uncles musical “*taste*” was music I thought was pretty corny. However, as time marched on and I became exposed to the old-time fiddlers, ranchers, loggers and assorted “ne’er-do-wells” in my adopted state, I began playing banjo (*my first love musical instrument*) and fiddle. Many evenings around timber camps, on Sunday’s, and holiday potlucks found me with friends and co-workers playing fiddle and banjo music.

Many times I have played tunes for older folks and have them “tear-up” because they have not heard a particular tune since childhood.



PHOTO By Rick Strohmyer

Rick Strohmyer entertaining the folks!

Over time, I have gained a deep reverence and appreciation regarding what music must have meant to the “old-timers” in the years before radios, tape recorders, DVD’s and television. Often I have played tunes for older folks and have them “tear-up” because they have not heard a particular tune since childhood; since their “Uncle Joe” or grandpa or some other acquaintance played those songs.

In my career as a natural resource manager, I have worked as a forester, logger, smokejumper, fuels management specialist and range management technician to name a few. To help keep my life in perspective while working in those arenas I also amused myself by hunting, fly-fishing, skiing and making music. As I have traveled across the country, most of my co-workers will attest that a banjo or fiddle has never been too far from my hands.

Over the years, I have gained an interest in the regional dialects of different music styles in general, and especially fiddle tunes from throughout the United States, becoming a self-styled musicologist of sorts.

My musical background has afforded me unique opportunities to make personal and professional connections with folks as I have moved around the country. With the move to Miles City in 2002, again I have used music as a vehicle to meet and interact with local folks.

‘Hoof’... continued on page 3

‘Hoof’... continued from page 2

With this latest move and as has become my custom, I was soon playing “old time” music with local folks for local benefits and community events, like the Miles City Senior’s “Drop in Center”, Historical Ursaline Convent Fund Raisers, 4th of July Chatachqua / Parade events. My tunes and new handmade “fretless banjo” caught the attention of some local folks that are *recruiters* for the “*Montana Committee for the Humanities*” (MCH) - Speakers Bureau. They recommended that my music be presented in a program sponsored by the MCH, so I filled out an application and “low and behold” they thought my music had some historical relevance and offered me an appointment to the Montana Speakers Bureau.

Around this time the “*National Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee*” held a “Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Showcase” where a host of Montanans were asked to participate in a “*revue*” of historically pertinent presentations to help celebrate the Lewis and Clark Corps II event throughout Montana in 2005 and 2006. My MCH – Speaker’s Bureau program was one selected for this honor this past summer.

I have played my fiddle and fretless banjo at a number of Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Committee events with the National Park Service’s “Lewis and Clark Corps II – Signature Events”. Through the spring and summer of 2005, I presented my MCH program “*Pioneer Muscology of Montana – Lewis and Clark Expedition through the Gold Rush*” in Glasgow, Fort Benton, Great Falls, Helena, Dillon, Camas Prairie, ID, Lolo, Lewis and Clark Caverns, Forsyth, Sidney, Big Timber, and numerous other communities and schools throughout the state.

I would not have had the opportunity to be part of this Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Celebration had it not been for the understanding and assistance I have received and continue to receive from my DNRC supervisors, peers and co-workers. They have all been extremely understanding and supportive in affording me this “once in a lifetime” opportunity to make a contribution to the national Lewis and Clark Bicentennial event.



Congratulations WRD Retirees !



PHOTO By Debrae Elnance

Johnh Un Kim

After an accounting career that spanned 35 years, Johnh Kim retired on August 19, 2005. Johnh served as the fiscal officer for the State Water Projects Bureau within the Water Resources Division of DNRC. With these many years of precise accounting practices and dedicated service to the DNRC, he will be sorely missed.



PHOTO By WRD Staff

Robert ‘Bob’ Arrington

Bob Arrington recently retired after 24 years with DNRC. He spent the first half of his career working in the Water Rights Bureau as the Adjudication Program Manager. He was responsible for overhaul of the claim examination manual after the Supreme Court Claim Examination Rules were adopted in the late 1980’s. The last half of Bob’s career was spent with State Water Projects where he was responsible for the Emergency Action Plans and Operation and Maintenance Manuals for the state owned dams, as well as much of the embankment instrumentation and monitoring. Bob was well known for his tenacity when it came to completing difficult projects and he will be greatly missed.

Jack Zanto ‘Hangs It Up!’

After 30 years of service with the State of Montana, Jack Zanto has retired to pursue other endeavors. His short-term occupational plans include being a professional fan for all Montana State University sporting events. Volleyball particularly grabs his attention, as his daughter Meagan is a four-year standout in the program. Future plans also include acting, as jack and his wife, Susie, star in the Bleachers

Restaurant commercials. We know more offers will flood their way. Jack and his son Ryan have been voted “employees of the month” at Emiliano’s (another local haunt) because of their ardent patronage of the establishment.

Jack joined DNRC in 1978 and has enhanced our department with his wonderful sense of humor and solid technical computer skills. He wrote two valuable computer programs, the Water Rights Data Base and the Loan and Grant System. Both programs were key to business success and efficiencies within the agency for many years. Most of all Jack brightened the day of every staff member with his positive attitude and computer assistance. We wish him the very best!



PHOTO By Ross Campbell